

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

FROM THE “AGE OF LIMITS” TO THE AGE OF REAGAN

Objectives

A thorough study of Chapter Thirty-Three should enable the student to understand:

1. The efforts of President Gerald Ford to overcome the effects of Richard Nixon’s resignation.
2. The rapid emergence of Jimmy Carter as a national figure and the reasons for his victory in 1976.
3. Carter’s emphasis on human rights and its effects on international relations.
4. Carter’s role in bringing about the Camp David agreement and the impact of this agreement on the Middle East.
5. Why the United States had so much difficulty in freeing the hostages held by Iran and the effect of this episode on the Carter presidency.
6. The nature of the “Reagan revolution” and the meaning of “supply-side” economics.
7. The staunchly anticommunist Reagan foreign policy.
8. The changing demography of America from 1970 to 1990.
9. The increasingly conservative mood of the American electorate.
10. The emergence of a new era in foreign policy with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Main Themes

1. That Gerald Ford managed to restore confidence in the presidency but remained unable to make significant breakthroughs in solving the nation’s international and economic problems.
2. That the difficult problems faced by Jimmy Carter, including a sluggish economy, an energy crunch, and a Middle Eastern crisis, combined with his leadership style to ensure that he would be a one-term president.
3. That Ronald Reagan’s personality soothed Americans and his brand of conservatism struck a responsive chord as he moved toward a reduced role for government in the economy and an increased emphasis on the military.
4. How the New Right challenged the liberal-moderate consensus that had dominated American politics since the New Deal.
5. How the end of the Cold War turned foreign policy focus to other matters, especially the Middle East.

Glossary

1. demography: The study of population, including birth and death rates, residence patterns, and regional shifts.
2. pentecostal Christianity: A type of fundamentalism that stresses faith healing and baptism by the Holy Spirit. The spirit manifests itself when followers speak in unknown tongues. Pentecost was an ancient Hebrew festival, and, according to the Book of Acts, on the first Pentecost after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, the apostles spoke in tongues when they heard a sound like the rush of a mighty wind.

Pertinent Questions

POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY AFTER WATERGATE (894-897)

1. How did his pardon of Richard Nixon affect Gerald Ford's political standing?
2. What policies did the Ford administration employ to fight the recession of 1974–1975? How effective were they? How did the energy crisis complicate Ford's problems?
3. What themes and style did Jimmy Carter play on to win the nomination and presidency in 1976? How did that approach hamper him as president?
4. What role did "human rights" play in Carter's foreign policy?
5. How did Carter manage to help bring about a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel?
6. What led to the Iranian hostage crisis? What political effects did it have on the Carter administration? How was the crisis resolved?
7. How did the Carter administration react to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan?

THE RISE OF THE NEW AMERICAN RIGHT (898- 903)

8. Where is the "Sunbelt"? What were the political implications of its rise?
9. Describe the basis of Christian evangelicalism. How could it lead to both social liberalism, as in Jimmy Carter, and, more typically, cultural conservatism, as in Jerry Falwell?
10. What issues did the "Christian right" stress?
11. How did activists build the New Right? What was Ronald Reagan's role in the emergence of the movement? How did Gerald Ford's actions actually enhance the New Right even though he was not part of it?
12. To what extent was the tax revolt of the 1970s and 1980s as much an attack on government programs in principle as it was a frustration with high taxes?
13. Why did Ronald Reagan win such a decisive victory in 1980? What happened in the congressional races?

THE "REAGAN REVOLUTION" (903-910)

14. What were the key elements of the Reagan coalition? How did it differ from the traditional Republican constituency?
15. Explain the assumptions of supply-side economics ("Reaganomics") and how the Reagan administration implemented it. How did the economy respond?
16. Explain the concept of "deregulation." What steps were taken under Reagan.
17. What lifted the economy out of the 1982–83 recession? What contribution did Reagan's economic policy make to the recovery?
18. What long-term developments and short-term actions of the Reagan years led to the record federal budget deficits?
19. What stance toward the Soviets and communism in general constituted the so-called Reagan Doctrine? How was this approach applied in Latin America and the Caribbean?
20. How did the rise in terrorism as a political tactic shape American foreign policy in North Africa and the Middle East?
21. What did the election of 1984 reveal about the changing nature of American politics?

AMERICA AND THE WANING OF THE COLD WAR (910-915)

22. Describe the process by which the Soviet Union and its Eastern European bloc ceased to exist. What emerged in its place?
23. How did Ronald Reagan react to Mikhail Gorbachev? What concrete agreement resulted?
24. Describe the Iran-contra scandal and its political impact. What other scandals plagued the Reagan administration?
25. What main campaign strategy did George Bush use to come from behind and defeat Michael Dukakis? What happened in the Congressional elections?
26. Even though President Bush lacked a clear domestic agenda, what significant measures did pass during his term of office? What was the most serious domestic challenge that faced Bush?
27. What precipitated the 1990–1991 Persian Gulf crisis and war? What role did the United Nations play? What was the outcome?
28. What broad issue was the key to Bill Clinton's victory in 1992? What role did Ross Perot play?

PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE: THE MALL (898-899)

29. Why did shopping mall developers endeavor to control so many aspects of the environment? What did some observers perceive as the downside to the mall.

Identification

Identify each of the following, and explain why it is important within the context of the chapter.

1. Helsinki Conference
2. Mao Zedong
3. SALT II
4. Panama Canal Treaty
5. Camp David Acords
6. diplomatic relations with China
7. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini
8. Billy Graham
9. Christian Coalition
10. Nelson Rockefeller
11. Proposition 13
12. "Teflon president"
13. "neo conservatives"
14. "Star Wars"—SDI
15. "nuclear freeze"
16. Grenada
17. Sandinistas
18. Beirut barracks incident
19. Walter Mondale
20. Jesse Jackson
21. Geraldine Ferraro

- 22. Tiananmen Square
- 23. Savings and Loan crisis
- 24. Saddam Hussein

Document 1

Read the sections of the text dealing with the differing styles, personalities, and policies of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. The excerpts below, the first from Carter's so-called malaise speech of July 15, 1979, and the second from Reagan's State of the Union Address on February 4, 1986, illustrate the contrasting styles. Carter's address was given at a time when he was under considerable attack for his leadership, whereas Reagan's was delivered while his popularity was at a high point. Both speeches contain specific legislative agendas, but the speeches are more memorable for their general messages than for their specific proposals. Consider the following questions: How do the two documents illustrate the differences between the leadership styles of Reagan and Carter? Each speech cites experiences or opinions of supposedly typical Americans; compare and contrast the use of these examples. The America described by Reagan in 1986 was very different from that described by Carter in 1979; had America truly changed that much? Had Reagan restored national confidence through rhetoric or through long-term solutions to difficult problems? In light of the state of the nation and the world in the early 1990s, which speech was more realistic? Which was more prophetic?

[President Carter speaking.] . . . I want to speak to you tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy.

I do not mean our political and civil liberties. They will endure. And I do not refer to the outward strength of America—the nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world with unmatched economic power and military might. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will.

We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation.

The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America. The confidence that we have always had as a people is not simply some romantic dream or a proverb in a dusty book that we read just on the Fourth of July. It is the idea which founded our nation and which has guided our development as a people. Confidence in the future has supported everything else—public institutions and private enterprise, our own families and the very Constitution of the United States. Confidence has defined our course and has served as a link between generations.

We've always believed in something called progress. We've always had a faith that the days of our children would be better than our own.

Our people are losing that faith. . . . But just as we are losing our confidence in the future, we are also beginning to close the door on our past.

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does but by what one owns. . . .

Often you see paralysis and stagnation and drift. You don't like it. And neither do I.

What can we do? First of all, we must face the truth and then we can change our course. We simply must have faith in each other. Faith in our ability to govern ourselves and faith in the future of this nation. Restoring that faith and that confidence to America is now the most important task we face. . . .

And we are the generation that will win the war on the energy problem, and in that process rebuild the unity and confidence of America. . . .

Energy will be the immediate test of our ability to unite this nation. And it can also be the standard around which we rally. On the battlefield of energy we can win for our nation a new confidence, and we can seize control again of our common destiny. . . .

[At this point, the speech lists six specific points emphasizing conservation and reduced energy consumption.]

I do not promise you that this struggle for freedom will be easy. I do not promise a quick way out of our nation's problems when the truth is that the only way out is an all-out effort. . . . There is simply no way to avoid sacrifice. . . . In closing, let me say this: I will do my best, but I will not do it alone. Let your voice be heard. Whenever you have a chance, say something good about our country. With God's help and for the sake of our nation, it is time for us to join hands in America.

Let us commit ourselves together to a rebirth of the American spirit. Working together with our common faith, we cannot fail.

President Jimmy Carter, television address to the nation, July 15, 1979.

* * *

[President Reagan speaking.] I have come to review with you the progress of our nation, to speak of unfinished work and to set our sights on the future. I am pleased to report the state of the union is stronger than a year ago, and growing stronger each day. Tonight, we look out on a rising America—firm of heart, united in spirit, powerful in pride and patriotism. America is on the move.

But it wasn't long ago that we looked out on a different land—locked factory gates, long gasoline lines, intolerable prices and interest rates turning the greatest country on Earth into a land of broken dreams. Government growing beyond our consent had become a lumbering giant, slamming shut the gates of opportunity, threatening to crush the very roots of our freedom.

What brought America back? The American people brought us back—with quiet courage and common sense; the undying faith that in this nation under God the future will be ours, for the future belongs to the free. . . .

Family and community are the co-stars of this great American comeback. They are why we say tonight: private values must be at the heart of public policies.

What is true for families in America is true for America in the family of free nations. History is no captive of some inevitable force. History is made by men and women of vision and courage. Tonight, freedom is on the march. The United States is the economic miracle, the model to which the world once again turns. We stand for an idea whose time is now. . . .

We speak tonight of an agenda for the future, an agenda for a safer, more secure world. And we speak about the necessity for actions to steel us for the challenges of growth, trade, and security in the next decade and the year 2000. And we will do it—not by breaking faith with bedrock principles, but by breaking free from failed policies. . . . [At this point the speech goes into specific proposals for a balanced budget amendment, defense spending, tax reform, and other matters.]

America is ready, America can win the race to the future—and we shall.

The American dream is a song of hope that rings through the night winter air. Vivid, tender music that warms our hearts when the least among us aspire to the greatest things. . . . [At this point he introduces four young people and tells of their accomplishments in science, music, public service, and personal bravery.]

Would you four stand up for a moment. Thank you. You are heroes of our hearts. We look at you and know it's true—in this land of dreams fulfilled where greater dreams may be imagined, nothing is impossible, no victory is beyond our reach; no glory will ever be too great. So now it's up to us, all of us, to prepare America for that day when our work will pale before the greatness of America's champions in the 21st century.

The world's hopes rest with America's future. America's hopes rest with us. So let us go forward to create our world of tomorrow—in faith, in unity, and in love. God bless you, and God bless America.

President Ronald Reagan, State of the Union Address, February 4, 1986.

Document 2

Consider carefully the sections the chapter concerning the end of the Cold War. The challenge facing American policymakers as we enter the twenty-first century is how to restructure foreign policy for the post-Cold War world. Secretary of State Warren Christopher confronted this challenge in his October 1993 address on the occasion of the opening of the new National Foreign Affairs Training Center, which will help prepare diplomats for the future. As you read excerpts from Secretary Christopher's speech, consider the following questions. What events during the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations led to the "historic moment [that] requires a new diplomacy"? What are the "new priorities" that Christopher outlines?

Remaking American Diplomacy in the Post-Cold War World

The Clinton Administration is the first to take office since the end of the Cold War. We have an opportunity—indeed, a responsibility—to remake American diplomacy in a new world that is unburdened by superpower confrontation.

This historic moment requires a new diplomacy that advances the priorities reflecting the possibilities and the perils of the post-Cold War era. That is why President Clinton has placed economic policy at the center of our foreign policy; why he has made nonproliferation [of nuclear weapons] the arms control agenda of the 1990s; why he has committed America to enlarge the sway of democratic values around the world; and why he has moved global issues into the mainstream of American foreign policy—issues such as protecting the environment and reducing population growth.

These new priorities reflect a broader definition of our national security—and they will require an expanded role for American diplomacy—a role that can be cultivated in these wonderful new quarters.

For more than two centuries, diplomacy has been a vital instrument of our national security. But security during the Cold War was largely based upon our military's ability to contain Soviet power and to deter war. Now is the time when diplomacy—supported by a credible military force—can assume a new potency on behalf of a strong and secure America.

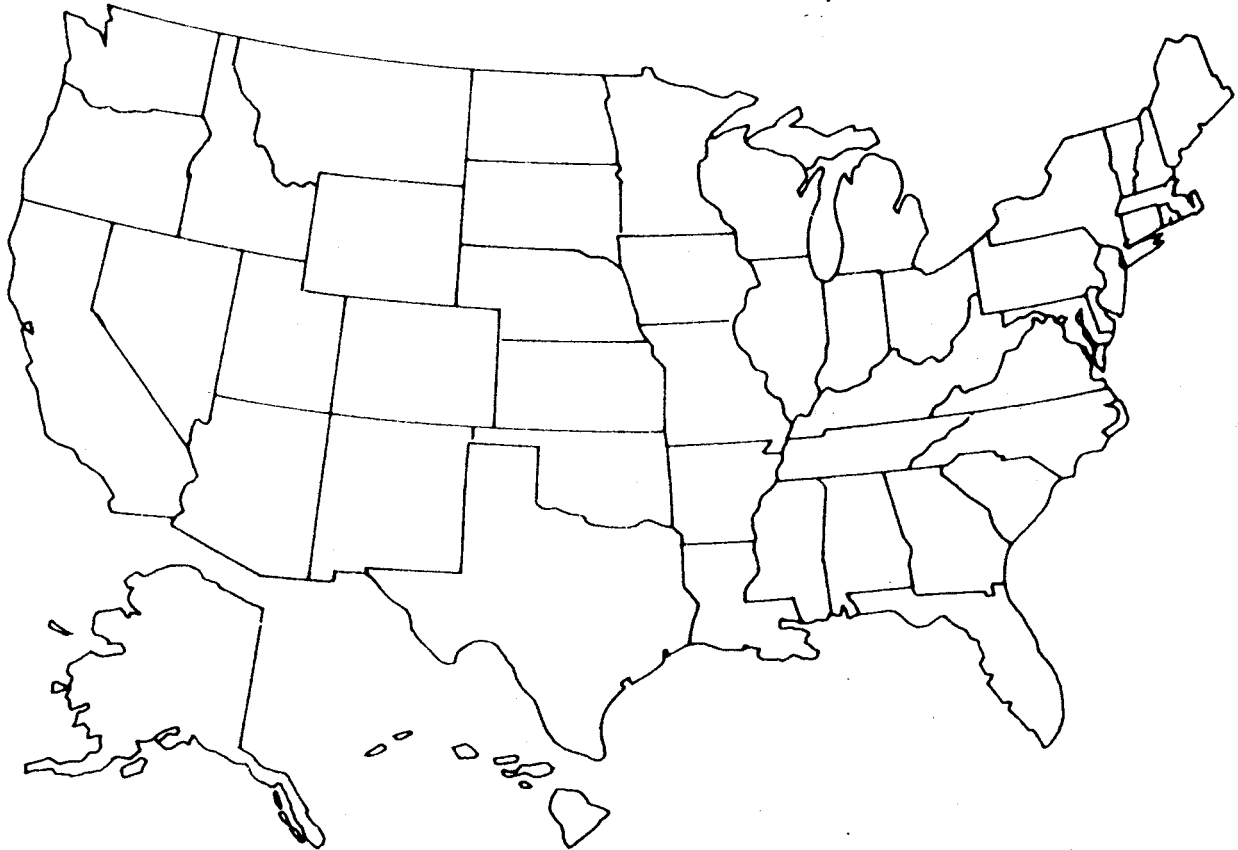
From *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, October 18, 1993.

Map Exercise

Fill in or identify the following on the blank map provided. Use the maps in the text as your source.

1. States with a 1970–1990 growth rate of 15 percent or more.
2. Cities that were among the top ten in growth in 1950 but *not* in 1990.
3. Cities that were among the top ten in 1990 but *not* in 1950.

4. Cities that were among the top ten in both censuses but that lost relative rank.
5. States that *gained* representation in the House of Representatives, and thereby electoral votes, after the 1980 census and those that *lost*. (Compare the figures on the maps for the 1980 and 1984 presidential elections; the 1980 count was still based on the 1970 census. Remember, the electoral vote is equal to the number of representatives plus two. For further information you may also compare the electoral totals for 1948, based on the 1940 census, with those in 1984.)



Interpretative Questions

Based on what you have filled in, answer the following. On some of the questions you will need to consult the narrative in your text for information or explanation.

1. What were the congressional and presidential political implications of the growth of the Sunbelt?
2. What problems did the demographic shift to the Sunbelt leave for the Northeast, in general, and many of its central cities, in particular?

Summary

As president, Gerald Ford worked to heal the wounds of Watergate and restore respect for the presidency. His pardon of Richard Nixon was probably the most controversial act of his caretaker period in office. Jimmy Carter turned out to be a more effective campaigner than president. His administration was marked by an inability to set a tone of leadership. He made no significant strides toward solving the energy crisis and took only halting steps toward his goal of making the federal government more efficient. His last year in office was dominated by the Iranian hostage crisis, which at first boosted his popularity but later may have cost him another term. An upsurge in conservatism came from demographic shifts to the Sunbelt, the activism of the Christian right, the ideology of the neoconservatives, and effective tactics by right-wing organizers. Ronald

Reagan won the 1980 election by riding this conservative crest and by exploiting deep-seated feelings of resentment over America's seeming weakness abroad. Congress quickly passed his supply-side economics plan of tax reductions and spending cuts, but a year later, the nation was mired in recession. However, the downturn proved brief and with the return of prosperity, Reagan won easy reelection.

Review Questions

These questions are to be answered with essays. This will allow you to explore relationships between individuals, events, and attitudes of the period under review.

1. Did Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon accomplish its purpose to "shut and seal the book" on Watergate? What else did Ford do to try to restore credibility to the presidency?
2. How effective was Jimmy Carter in applying the human-rights principle to American foreign policy? How did his approach differ from the actions taken by Ronald Reagan and George Bush?
3. How did the nation's energy needs complicate both the foreign and domestic policies of presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush?
4. What were the political, economic, and social implications of the marked demographic changes in the American population during the 1970s and 1980s?
5. Describe the various elements of the rise of conservative politics in the 1970s and 1980s. How did they come together around the figure of Ronald Reagan?

Chapter Self Test

After you have read the chapter in the text and done the exercises in the Study Guide, take the following self test to see if you understand the material you have covered. Answers appear at the end of the Study Guide.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Circle the letter of the response that best answers the question or completes the statement.

1. President Gerald Ford's popularity with the American public fell dramatically as a result of his:
 - a. pardon of Richard Nixon.
 - b. handling of the "Mayaguez" incident.
 - c. vetoes of large numbers of congressional enactments.
 - d. appointment of Nelson Rockefeller as vice president.

2. The death of Mao Zedong in China:
 - a. led to a period of disruption, chaos, and violence
 - b. brought to power a more moderate government that wanted closer ties with the United States.
 - c. intensified Chinese pressure on Taiwan inspiring the United States to increase military aid to the island regime.
 - d. set off a wave of provincial revolutions that split China.
3. Ford's foreign policy included support for three of the following. Which is the *exception*?
 - a. the SALT II agreement
 - b. the Helsinki agreement on European boundaries
 - c. the continued rapprochement with China after the death of Mao Zedong
 - d. the abandonment of U. S. mediation efforts in the Middle East
4. Jimmy Carter's success in the election of 1976 resulted in large part because:
 - a. Ford refused to choose a running mate who appealed to the Republican right.
 - b. Carter's considerable service in Washington assured voters of an experienced administrator.
 - c. Ford's acerbic personality had generated an atmosphere of bitterness and acrimony in Washington.
 - d. Carter seemed to possess honesty, piety, and an outsider's skepticism of the federal government.
5. Which of the following best describes the nation's economy during Carter's final two years in office?
 - a. modest inflation and stable interest rates
 - b. modest inflation and declining interest rates
 - c. rapid inflation and record high interest rates
 - d. rapid inflation and stable interest rates
6. Carter had hoped to base American foreign policy on increased attention to:
 - a. flexible military response whenever democratic governments were challenged.
 - b. expansion of American economic interests overseas.
 - c. reduction of American responsibility for involvement in world conflicts.
 - d. the issue of how nations respect human rights.
7. The Camp David summit, hosted by President Carter, was a meeting between the leaders of Israel and:
 - a. Egypt.
 - b. Libya.
 - c. Lebanon.
 - d. the Palestine Liberation Organization.

8. Three of the following were significant features of Carter's foreign policy in the early years of his administration. Which is the *exception*?
- abandoning SALT II as futile
 - completing negotiations to transfer the Canal Zone to Panama
 - using diplomatic pressure to promote human rights in other countries
 - continuing progress toward improving relations with China
9. In November 1979, Iranian militants took over the U.S. embassy in Teheran and held fifty-three embassy personnel hostage for more than a year. The immediate provocation for their act was the fact that the Carter administration:
- began to support Iraq in its war with Iran.
 - refused to recognize Iran's new regime.
 - attempted to restore the pro-American Shah to power in Iran.
 - allowed the exiled former Shah of Iran to enter the United States.
10. In response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), President Carter did three of the following. Which is the *exception*?
- He imposed economic sanctions on the Soviet Union.
 - He called for a boycott of the 1980 Olympics in Moscow.
 - He withdrew SALT II from consideration by the Senate.
 - He invoked the SEATO treaty, by which member nations were to confer with one another in case of attack.
11. The rapid population growth in the "Sunbelt" shifted political power to the region and tended to strengthen which political viewpoint?
- conservative, antigovernment
 - liberal, government activist
 - moderate, middle-of-the-road
 - none of the above; effect basically neutral
12. Which of the following is a common thread of evangelical Christianity?
- belief in personal conversion through direct communication with God
 - conservative, right-wing politics, especially on social welfare issues
 - belief in the literal, inerrant interpretation of the Bible, especially on evolution
 - all of the above
13. Ronald Reagan and his administration received strong support from three of the following groups. Which is the *exception*?
- "neo-conservatives"
 - New Right
 - feminists and civil rights activists
 - conservative business leaders

14. The "supply-side" economic theory that President Reagan sought to implement early in his administration called for:
 - a. increasing government spending to stimulate consumption.
 - b. maintaining high interest rates to control inflation.
 - c. cutting taxes to encourage new investment.
 - d. all of the above.
15. During the Reagan administration, the federal budget:
 - a. experienced severe deficits.
 - b. noticeably declined.
 - c. shifted from reliance on the income tax to a national sales tax.
 - d. rose markedly in domestic spending but remained flat on defense.
16. With respect to the civil war in El Salvador, the Reagan administration:
 - a. maintained a strictly neutral position.
 - b. sent in a peacekeeping force of American combat troops.
 - c. supported the existing military regime with money and material.
 - d. supported the revolutionaries, who were seeking to overthrow the military regime.
17. In Nicaragua, the Sandinistas were:
 - a. pro-American forces.
 - b. anti-American forces.
 - c. essentially the same as the contras in Honduras.
 - d. supporters of the former Somoza regime.
18. Reagan's policy toward Lebanon involved:
 - a. supporting Lebanon with military aid for its border conflict with Saudi Arabia.
 - b. sending in American marines as a peacekeeping force following Israeli-PLO clashes but removing them after over 200 were killed in a terrorist attack.
 - c. backing Israel in the United Nations in its effort to make Lebanon part of the Left Bank area controlled by Israel.
 - d. none of the above.
19. In the national elections of 1984, the Democrats made electoral history by, for the first time, nominating a vice presidential candidate who was:
 - a. Jewish.
 - b. female.
 - c. African-American.
 - d. Hispanic.
20. The leader of the Soviet Union who presided over its dissolution was
 - a. Nikita Khrushchev
 - b. Mikhail Gorbachev
 - c. Helsinki Accord
 - d. Michael Dukakis

TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

Read each statement carefully. Mark true statements "T" and false statements "F."

1. Gerald Ford's compassionate pardon of Richard Nixon for his role in the Watergate scandal improved Ford's standing in public opinion polls.
2. President Ford faced the relatively unusual problem of simultaneous inflation and recession.
3. Ronald Reagan mounted a strong effort to take the Republican nomination away from President Ford in 1976.
4. In his campaign for president, Jimmy Carter emphasized that he was a Washington "insider" who could be more effective with Congress than President Ford had been.
5. Jimmy Carter pledged that a major focus of his foreign policy would be the defense of "human rights."
6. President Carter cancelled U.S. participation in the 1980 summer Olympic Games in Moscow in protest of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
7. The treaty providing for transfer of control of the Panama Canal to the government of Panama won ratification in the U.S. Senate by a very close vote, despite President Carter's opposition.
8. The term "Sagebrush Rebellion" was used to describe the growing environmental consciousness in the West, where water was scarce and timber and mining interests were destroying natural areas.
9. The passage of "Proposition 13" in California was a manifestation of the growing popular mood often called the "tax revolt."
10. Evangelical Christianity could lead individuals to either liberal or conservative political activism, depending on which issues and concerns motivated them.
11. Gerald Ford's appointment of Nelson Rockefeller as vice president was designed to appease the New Right wing of the Republican party.
12. Although Ronald Reagan won a convincing victory over Jimmy Carter in 1980, the Republican Party made no significant gains in Congress.
13. Although Ronald Reagan was not able to fulfill his promise to balance the federal budget, he was able to reverse the trend of the Carter years and the amount of the annual deficit decreased significantly.
14. Ronald Reagan was sometimes called the "Teflon president" because it seemed to many observers that bad publicity never seemed to stick to him personally.
15. In the negotiations with Iran that eventually led to the freeing of the American hostages, the United States promised to release Iranian financial assets frozen in the United States.
16. The "supply-side" approach to economic policy was sometimes called "Reagonomics."
17. Although Reagan's opponents argued that his economic policies would lead to recession, the economy stayed on an expansion pace throughout his presidency.
18. Ronald Reagan took a hard-line stance toward the Soviet Union, even calling it, on one occasion, the "evil empire."
19. The Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars") was designed as a defense against nuclear attack, using lasers and satellites to intercept incoming missiles.
20. The major accomplishment of the Persian Gulf War was to depose Saddam Hussein from control of Iraq thereby removing a major destabilizing influence in the region.